Meroure of Wisdome Johannis de Irlandia.

Habilitationsschrift

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eingereicht von

Charles Macpherson, M. A., Dr. phil.

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MEROURE OF WYSDOME

THE MANUSCRIPT.

THE manuscript from which the subjoined text has been printed is preserved in the Advocates' Library in Edinburgh, where it is laconically catalogued :—

> "*Johannis de Irlandia Opera Theologica—Saec. xv. —18.2.8.*"

No other copy is known to exist.

This somewhat uninviting title, enhanced by Leyden's gratuitous warning,[1] seems to have scared from nearer investigation both the curious and the scholar, else it is inconceivable how such an important memorial of early Scottish Letters should have lain so long neglected. Other than merely cursory allusions, the only references to the book have hitherto been, the mischievous description of Leyden alluded to above,[2] the enthusiastic and instructive essay of Mr Stevenson,[3] and a few notes and remarks by Prof. Gregory Smith.[4] Let it be a first act of justice, therefore, to recover its original and forgotten name—"Meroure of Wyβdome"—the title the author

[1] "Complaynt of Scotland," ed. Leyden, Edin., 1801—Prelim. Dissert., p. 84.

[2] *Opus cit.*, *loc. cit.*, pp. 25, 84-85.

[3] "Scottish Antiquary," Vol. xv., pp. 1-14.

[4] "Specimens of Middle Scots," Edin., 1902, pp. lxx. ff., 92 ff., and p. 294.

himself intended for it, and by which it is henceforth likely to be known.[1]

The MS. is on paper and completely unpaged; the binding is modern—red Russia with gold tooling—and the volume measures about 11¼ by 8½ inches. Originally it must have been considerably larger, but in process of a previous binding (or bindings) most of the catchwords at the ends of the quires have been shorn off. The work is thus collated :—

a 7 (wants 7), *b* 11, *c-g* 12, *h* 11 (wants 9), *i-m* 12, *n* 11, *o* 11, *p-s* 12, *t* 11, *v* 12, *x* 12, *y* 12, *z* 11, A 12, B 11, C 11, D 12, E 11, F 12, G 12, H 15 (8 almost destroyed, 9 blank).

With the exception of the first few and the last folio, the volume is in a good state of preservation. Spaces have everywhere been left for illumination, but the original intention has not been carried out.

Quotations (more especially Latin quotations) are, with few exceptions, denoted in red, as are also initials. The handwriting (minor peculiarities apart) is the ordinary scribal hand of the period (fifteenth century *ad fin.*), is, in general, easily legible, and is the same throughout. Inconsistencies and blemishes are seldom encountered, though contracted forms are frequent, and not always readily decipherable. Punctuation in the modern sense is not employed, the author marking his pauses by the customary arbitrary sloping dashes. Not counting the flyleaves, the volume consists of 361 folios, and there are from 28 to 31 lines to the page.

The book concludes with the words :

> "Writtin and completit in Edinburgh be þi humyl oratore, Johne of Irland, greit and promovit in

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of Wyþdome," Vol. i., p. 14.

[2] Excepting, of course, the obvious insertions and entries of later date. *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," ffol. 7*b*, 87*a*, 115*a*, 173*b*, etc.

parys, the ȝer of the jncarnacioune a thowsand, four hundreth and nynty ȝeris,"

and a colophon follows on a blank page :—

> "*Hoc opus fuit Compilatum apud Edinburgh, ob Reverenciam nostri saluatoris, domini jhesu, et sue matris, et pro vtilitate Scotorum Regis, Jacobi quarti, Cleri, et tocius populi, a magistro Johanne de Irlandia, sacre theologie professore paris[i]ensi, Rectore de Foresta, anno gracie j^m iiii^o lxxxx^o. Orate pro eo.*[1] "

Thus we learn that the work was composed just before 1490, for the use of James IV. of Scotland, the ill-starred monarch who perished at Flodden in 1513, and of his clergy and people. That it was primarily intended for the king is evident from the facts that the work is dedicated to his majesty,[2] and that he is always directly addressed in it.[3] Never, one may add, was such exhortation more needed, by cleric and layman alike.[4]

If this is the actual volume prepared for the king must remain a moot point; at all events, there are no traces of diligent royal perusal or even of royal possession, and in any case it was soon in other hands. On various blanks throughout the MS.[5] we come upon the signature "Alex^r Guthre" scrawled in a large, unpractised hand. This has been held to be the autograph of a priest.[6] But it is no clerical hand. It is, in fact, the signature of none other than Sir Alexander Guthrie of that Ilk, an intimate of James IV., and who was slain with his king at Flodden. Now, if this be the original volume which the author (*sine dubio*) presented to the king, it is by no

[1] A similar entry, but less complete, is found on fol. 7.
[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," pp. 1-16 *passim*.
[3] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," pp. 1.1, 7.23, etc.
[4] *Cf.* Lang, "Hist. of Scotl.," Edin., 1900 (*seq.*), i. 343, 346, 353, etc.
[5] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," ffol. 87*a*, 115*a*, 173*b*, etc.
[6] By Mr Stevenson. *Cf.* "Scottish Antiq.," xv. 13.

means improbable that the king in his turn (book-lover as he was) should have made a gift of it to Sir Alexander for a purpose the latter had at heart.[1]

The next stage at least in its history is clearer. Near the beginning occurs an entry of several lines, also in the knight's hand :—

> "*Ex dono domini alexandri guthre de eodem,*
> *militis, insule ecclesie beate marie de Guthre,*
> *in eadem pro perpetuo remansuro.*
> *Alexander Guthre armiger.*" [2]

That is to say: Sir Alexander Guthrie, Knight, of that Ilk, presented the volume to the Church of the Blessed Mary of Guthrie (at some date unknown).[3] This church, situated in the present parish of Guthrie (Forfarshire), had been lavishly endowed by Sir David Guthrie (father of Sir Alexander and quondam Lord Treasurer of Scotland), who built the "South Yle"[4] mentioned (*insule*) above, and the privileges and benefits he conferred were further augmented by his son.[5]

Precisely at what time the "Meroure" came to rest in the Church of Guthrie is uncertain: at the latest, it was there before 1513, since a fine clerical hand has recorded, on a blank at the end of the volume, the obit of the knight and patron of the Church, who fell at Flodden in that year[6]:—

[1] *Cf. infra*, p. [illegible]

[2] But Mr Stevenson reads A.M.—Artium Magister—*vide* "Scottish Antiq.," xv. 13.

[3] An almost illegible and obviously ill-informed scrawl on the flyleaf attributes the presentation to Sir David Guthrie, the father: . . . *dni dauid guthre de eodem dedit istum codicem ecclesie de guthre* . . . gog (!) haff mersy off his saule . . . But Sir David was dead before the book was written! *Cf.* "D. N. B.," xxiii. 374.

[4] Communication from Rev. W. G. Law. *Cf.* "Warden's History of Forfarshire," *sub. voc.*

[5] "D. N. B.," *loc. cit.*

[6] *Cf.* "Scottish Antiq.," xiii. 108, *et* "D. N. B.," *loc. cit.*

> "*Obitus Alexandri Guthre de eodem, militis, et Alexandri Strathachin de Balmady apud bellum de Brankstoun in Northumberland, nono die mensis Septembris anno domini j^m v^c decimo tercio.*
> *Orate pro eis.*"

The name "Flodden" gradually displaced "Brankston"[1] in the popular memory, which is an indication that this obituary was entered soon, probably immediately, after the catastrophe, when memorial services for the dead patrons of the Church were being held. The "Alexander Strathachin"[2] mentioned in the obit was the then laird of Balmady — the present estate of Ochterlony — in the adjacent parish of Rescobie.

Other random (and partly illegible) entries in the "Meroure" include, an "*Ave Maria*", a "*forma absolutionis*," and a date in 1543[3]. Of the subsequent history of the MS. I can find no trace until it appears in Ruddiman's Catalogue of the Advocates' Library in 1742.

NOTE.—The numerous marginal corrections and interpolations raise the point—of especial interest to the philologist—Has the "Meroure" been written by Irelande's own hand? The handwriting, both text and corrections, is the same throughout, and seems a professional hand, while the frequent blunders (especially in the Latin) and mistaken catchwords (*e.g.* i. 7, 28, 35, etc.) would also go to prove it the work of an amanuensis. On the other hand, the marginal alterations are often independent and intelligent, adding an original thought sequence, as of a man correcting his own work (*e.g.* i. 11, 28, etc.). After long wavering, it has seemed best not to decide such a nice question on internal evidence alone, at any rate to leave it *sub judice* until access can be had to the Asloan MS.

[1] A village near the scene of battle.

[2] The family of Strathachin, Strathachny, Strachan (in its multifarious orthographies), was at one time of great importance in North Forfarshire and South Kincardine. *Cf.* "Warden's History of Forfarshire," *ad loc.*

[3] In a hand similar to, but not identical with, Sir Alexander's. *Cf.* "Meroure," fol. 126*a*, *et. al.*

THE AUTHOR.

EXCLUDING, of course, Huchown, *Magister Johannes de Irlandia* has the very best claims to be regarded as the "*magni nominis umbra*" of Early Scottish Letters. He has left scarcely a trace on contemporary records—the Exchequer Rolls,[1] the Registers of the Great[2] and of the Privy Seal,[3] the Accounts of the Lord High Treasurer,[4] the Chartularies,[5] all yield no direct information regarding him —and the conflicting statements of the historians too often conduce but to further perplexity. It requires virtually an effort to believe that he was in his day a scholar of international repute, a Doctor and Professor of the University of Paris, the familiar and adviser of two potent monarchs, an envoy on diplomatic missions many and delicate, a "kenned figure" at Court and in Parliament.

To begin with his surname. The designation "*de Irlandia*" has been mystifying, and has apparently given grounds in some quarters for believing him of Hibernian descent.[6] Francisque Michel inclines to make him a scion of the ancient Poitevin family of that name.[7] Ferrerius,[8] followed by Dempster,[9] says he was of Scottish

[1] "Exchequer Rolls of Scotland," Ed. Stuart & Burnett, Edin. 1878 (*seq.*), Vols. vi.-xii.

[2] Ed. Paul and Thomson, Edin. 1882 (*seq.*), Vol. ii. ff.

[3] Ed. Livingstone, Edin. 1908, Vol. i.

[4] Ed. Dickson and Paul, Edin. 1877 (*seq.*), Vols. i.-v.

[5] So far as published.

[6] Du Launy, "Hist. de l'Univ. de. Paris," cited by Leyden, *loc. cit.*, p. 85.

[7] "Les Écossais en France," etc., Lond. 1862, Vol. i. p. 177 *et. al.*

[8] "Scot. Hist. Hect. Boeth., cont. per. J. Ferrerium," Parisiis 1574, fol. 393*b*.

[9] "Hist. Eccl. Gentis Scot.," Bononiæ 1627—ed. Irving, Edin. 1829 Lib. ix. p. 752 (Edin. ed., Vol. ii. p. 397). Both Ferrerius and Dempster use the form "Irlandus."

extraction, and this view now proves to be right. In the work we are considering he styles himself (addressing James IV.) ". . . a clerk of paris borne of þi realme . . ."[1] and no one reading a page of the "Meroure" could be in any doubt. Thus the elusive *Johannes de Irlandia* is on his own showing a Scotsman and plain "John Irlande": he was simply masquerading in the Latinised form of surname then in vogue.

The date and locality of his birth are, however, more uncertain. Du Launy here again vouchsafes the information that Irlande entered the College of Navarre in 1446,[2] as a student of theology, but the statement does not bear examination. In the "Meroure," which he was composing between 1488 and 1490, the author twice says that he was in France "neire the tyme of thretty ȝere."[3] Fortunately he gives us also, in the last chapter of the book, an indication of the date of his *return* to Scotland, in the expression (again addressed to James IV.) . . . "efter sex ȝeris preichin in þi faderis (*i.e.*, James III.) realme and þine . . ."[4]. Hence, as we know the "Meroure" was completed in 1490,[5] we are enabled to fix his repatriation, on his own showing, about 1482-84—a date which we shall find is independently corroborated[6]—and, further, subtracting the "thretty ȝere" mentioned above, we may now assume that the date at which he began to reside in France is not very wide of 1455-60.

Utilising these details as a clue, we are rewarded with the first glimpse of our author in his native land. It were only natural to surmise that he must have attended a university at home before migrating to the Sorbonne, and this could hardly have been other

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of W." fol. 340*b*.
[2] *Loc. supra cit.*
[3] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," p. 83 and fol. 357*b*.
[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 357*a*.
[5] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 357*b*.
[6] *Cf.* "Acts of the Parl. of Scot.," ed. Thomson, Edin. 1814, Vol. ii., pp. 153, 167.

than St Andrews, then completing the first half-century of its existence.[1]

The Register of students attending in that day is no longer extant, but the graduation lists in the Faculty of Arts have luckily been preserved.[2] In these, under a heading "*Nomina Determinancium Anno* 1455," we encounter and note the name "*Georgius Huntar, pauper.*" There follows a second heading :—

> "*Item, post compotum Receptoris certi scolares determinabant, quorum nomina sequuntur.*"

The tenth name in this second list is "*Johannes Irlande, pauper.*"

From what follows the identity is assured, and the date tallies roughly with what we should expect. Hence Du Launy must be mistaken,[3] or be referring to a different Irlande—the name was common, both in Scotland and in France.

Now that Irlande has been run to earth at home, we are curious to know something of his reasons for leaving Scotland.[4] Here again the university records of St Andrews help us out—this time *anno* 1461. From the report of a meeting of the Faculty in that year it appears that Johannes Irlande aforesaid had harboured certain grievances against the aforesaid Georgius Huntar, and that, according to academic use and wont, he had appealed to the Faculty against the latter at the taking of degrees (*appellacione interiecta . . . tempore vocacionis eorundem ad licenciam*). As to the nature of the dispute it is idle to speculate, but the upshot of the matter was, that both

[1] Glasgow University was founded in 1450-51, Aberdeen in 1494, Edinburgh in 1582.

[2] These lists are as yet unpublished : for a transcription I am indebted to the courtesy of Dr Maitland Anderson.

[3] *Cf. supra*, p. 8. Bulæus ("Hist. Univ. Paris.," Tom v., Index) mentions a Johannes de Hirlandia, who was Rector of the University in 1469.

[4] In one sense the transition from St. Andrews to the Sorbonne was almost the regular career of the Scottish student

Irelande and Huntar left without degrees (*ipse et præfatus Johannes abierunt, licencia nondum optenta*). Hereupon they both betook themselves to the University of Paris, where they were "received" as Bachelors in 1459, and in 1460 as Licentiates.[1] Then their ways divided. Huntar returned to St. Andrews, protested his innocence, made his peace with the Faculty, and was admitted a member of it (after performing certain stringent and partly amusing conditions) "*ex gracia tantum et benignitate Facultatis.*" Irlande remained abroad, and this, coupled with the fact that Huntar was re-admitted, might seem to show that he was in the wrong of it. Now, as the incident above referred to occurred "*in actu vocacionis* (*i.e.*, well on in his Arts course), we may take 1458 as about the date of Irlande's departure from Scotland, and if we further assume him to be twenty in 1455, that gives us approximately 1435 as the date of his birth.

From the French authorities just cited we learn that Irlande belonged to the diocese of St Andrews, but I can find no corroboration of the statement at this stage.[2] If that be so, however, he may have been connected with the Irlandes of Perth—a numerous and distinguished ecclesiastical family.[3] (The "*pauper*" appended to his name in the records of St Andrews is by no means a barrier to the suggestion.) The dialect of the "Meroure" —a polite variety of the Fife-Lothian vernacular—justifies our calling him an "East Country" man.

[1] "Chartularium Univ. Paris.," ed. Denifle et Chatelain Parisiis, 1897 (*seq.*), Tom. ii.

[2] In a document of the year 1490 Irlande is spoken of as having been under the jurisdiction of the Archbishop of St Andrews, but this is to be taken in the hierarchial sense. *Cf.* "Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts" (Venetian), ed. Rawdon Brown, Lond. 1864 (No. 595).

[3] *Cf.* "Registr. Sec. Sig. Scot.," i., 999; "Exchequer Rolls" (Scot.), ix. 349, etc.; "Registr. Mag. Sig. Scot.," i. 18, 895, 896, etc.; "Accounts of Lord High Treasurer," No. 360 (1502), from which we learn that one of these Irlandes had "ixs. for writing of the citationis and lettrez on Maister Gawin Douglas, Provost of Sanct Gelis Kirk!"

Having thus worked backwards to his Scottish connection, let us next see how he fared in France. About 1458, as we have seen, he resumed in the Sorbonne the studies which had been interrupted at St Andrews. As he reached Paris just in time to benefit by the university reforms of the Cardinal Legate, Guillelmus de Estouteville, those curious in the matter may thus obtain a general idea of the course of his studies.[1] That he became well versed in Dialectics and in Latin—this latter being his academic, if not his usual language of communication—goes without saying. He was for his day well read in the humanities, more properly speaking, Virgil,[2] Horace,[3] Ovid,[4] and, if metre be any test, Lucretius[5] being his favourites among the poets, Cicero[6] among the rhetoricians. He was not unacquainted with Greek[7] and Hebrew,[8] both of which were taught at the Sorbonne in his time.[9] (Some of his etymological excursions, however, might nowadays provoke a smile). He knew something of Homer[10] and Demosthenes[10] and a good deal of Plato[10] and Aristotle[10]—these latter presumably in a Latin translation. But the groundwork of his knowledge was the theology of the Fathers and the schoolmen, the subtleties and mysticism of which he expounded and defended from an orthodox and conservative standpoint, which brought him credit and reputation among the dogmatists of the Sorbonne.[11] The

[1] "Chartularium Univ. Paris," ed. Denifle et Chatelain, Parisiis 1897, Tom. iv. p. 713 ff.

[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," p. 108.

[3] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 355, *et al.*

[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," p. 115.

[5] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," pp. 175 ff.

[6] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," pp. 31, 74, *et al.*

[7] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," pp. 77, 143.

[8] *Cf.* "Meroure of W." p. 130, *et al.*

[9] Greek by the famous Gregoire Tifernas in 1457, Hebrew by a professor two years earlier.

[10] *Cf.* Notes and Indexes to "Meroure of W."

[11] Ferrerius, "Append. ad Bœth.," fol. 402*a*.

year 1475 [1] saw him made Doctor of Theology, and the colophon of the "Meroure" informs us that he was before his return "*Professor Universitatis Parisiensis.*"

So far his career had been almost the traditional one of the Scottish scholar, but now the eye of Louis XI. lighted upon him, and he was to be drawn into the vortex of State affairs. In the "Meroure" we find this intimacy chronicled by himself—". . . the nobile King of France . . . that j was counsaloure, oratoure and familiare to . . . ," [2]—though he does not indicate to what exact turn of affairs he owed the signal distinction. With all respect to his learning, the trend of politics had almost certainly something to do with it, for the French monarch had an oar in many waters, and more than one Scot in his service.

The next stage in the career of Ireland embraces his diplomatic activity, which paved the way for his repatriation. According to Ferrerius [3] (*sub anno* 1471), he returned to his native land, whither his fame had travelled before him, at the express desire of James III. That king, like most of his line, showed a proclivity for ecclesiastical favourites,[4] and (himself a pietist) may well have invited a scholar of such distinction for his own sake. But political reasons almost certainly weighed with him as well. The "Ancient Alliance" was then a firm bond between Scotland and France, and the whole diplomacy of the age is characterised by the attempts of the English to sever it, and of Louis to turn the pact to advantage. Thus the probability is that the French monarch had dispatched Irlande as his mouthpiece on some delicate mission to his cousin of Scots, and thus brought him to the notice of James. Nor would the latter be ill-pleased to attach to

[1] *Teste* Du Launy, "Hist. de l'Univ. de Paris," *loc. cit. Cf.* Buchanan, "Rer. Scot. Hist.," Edin. 1583, xii. 138 (*sub anno* 1476), *et infra*, p. 16.

[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 211.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, fol. 391*a*.

[4] *Cf.* Lang, "Hist. of Scotland," Edin. 1900 (*seq.*), Vol. i., pp. 343, 353.

himself one who was, after all, his own subject, and who, skilfully utilised, might the better enable him to keep pace with the shifty designs of Louis. Conjecture apart, though Ferrerius first writes of Irlande's return *sub anno* 1471,[1] that must not be interpreted (as some would) to indicate that he returned definitely in that year. What evidence is available points the other way.

In 1476, according to Buchanan,[2] three years later according to Ferrerius,[3] according to Dempster a year later still,[4] Irlande was sent by Louis to James—the earliest of his diplomatic missions of which we have a definite record. Of the three, Buchanan's account is the least circumstantial, and he makes a curious mistake about the name[5] (calling him "*Roberto Irlando Scoto, Doctore Sorbonico*"), but the identity is beyond doubt. The avowed object of this embassy was to compose the feud between James, Louis' ally, and the Duke of Albany, Louis' protégé—a feud which then rent the Scottish kingdom to distraction.[6] But there was an implicit design as well, to wit, to incite the Scots to make war on their Southron neighbour. Dempster[7] mentions a lost work of Irlande—"*Reconciliationis Modum ad Jacobum III. Regem, super dissidio cum Duce Albaniæ*,"—which was, no doubt, an *ad hoc* piece of writing, and may have been inspired by the occasion. Be that as it may, his diplomatic efforts were not crowned with success: James elected rather to live at peace with Edward IV., but not with Albany, and Irlande returned *re infecta* to his royal master.[8]

[1] *Loc. cit.*, fol. 391*a*.

[2] "Rer. Scot. Hist.," xii. 138.

[3] *Loc. cit.*, fol. 393*b*.

[4] "Hist. Eccles. Gentis. Scot.," ix. 752. Possibly all these authorities are referring to one and the same embassy. The Scottish king's feud with his brother, Albany, came to a head in 1479.

[5] Which misleads Michel—*cf.* "Les Écossais en France," etc., Vol. i., p. 260.

[6] *Cf.* "D. N. B.," liv., p. 264 ff., and the Scottish historians.

[7] "Hist. Eccles. Gentis. Scot.," ix. 752.

[8] Leslie's account of the matter is interesting:—"Now Jhon Irland Doctour of Theologie, and in the college of Paris professor, to

However, he appears not to have desisted from his diplomatic activity. In this same year (1479) Albany, who had been imprisoned by James, broke ward and escaped to seek asylum with Louis in France, and also in this year (Ferrerius [1]) or in the following one (Dempster [2]) Irlande was again on embassy.[3] This time he found James more amenable, and (not without temporising) the King of Scots agreed to exert pressure on the English from the North. There is much confusion regarding the dates and sequence of these embassies, but for us the chief point to notice is, that negotiations on such delicate affairs must have given Irlande many opportunities of coming into contact with James III. Certain it is, that about this time an intimacy sprang up between them which was continued after Irlande returned to France, for he now composed several theological works for the king and sent them from Paris to him, along with two of the Latin hymns contained in the "Meroure." [4]

A breach was made in these relations by the death of Louis in 1483, and we thus come to the third stage in Irlande's career—his actual repatriation. We may take for granted that the death of his royal patron was not without influence on the fortunes of Irlande in France. Perhaps he failed to find touch with the new king,

Scotland from the ffrench king is sent legat, to provoke the Scotis king against Jngland, that the Jnglis king might find na occasioun to supplie the Duke of Burgundie against ffrance, quilk he feirit. Bot the ffrench king in this legacie cheiflie laboured for amitie betuene him and his brother Duke of Albanie; quilk the legat nocht obteyneng returnes. . . ."—"Hist. of Scot.," ed. Cody and Murison (Scot. T. S.), Edin. 1895, Vol. ii., p. 94.

[1] *Loc. ante cit.*, fol. 393*b*.

[2] *Loc. ante cit.*, ix., 752.

[3] *Cf.* Leslie, "Hist of Scot.," ii. 95 :—

"Doctor Jreland forsaid, conuoyet with a knycht and a religious man, cu*m*is legat agane, to steir vp the King of Scotis, and ernestlie persvade him to thretne weiris against Jngland . . . Quhairfor the scotis king, til Jngland directes tua heralds . . ."

[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," pp. 164-65 and 171-86.

Charles VIII., possibly he did not endeavour. For reasons which will be given anon, there is no doubt that he quitted Paris finally about this time and returned to Edinburgh, and, for my own part, I should like to see in the death of Louis XI. not merely the *date* but the *occasion* of his return. Ferrerius' statement that King James knew no rest until he had induced him to return (". . . *non quievit donec . . . ad se revocasset . . .*")[1] is to be regarded in the light of a rhetorical exaggeration.

That he terminated his long exile about 1483, and not much before or after, is proved by two important pieces of independent evidence. The first is his own testimony in the "Meroure" (composed 1488-90), where he says of himself (addressing James IV. ". . . efter sex ȝeris preichin in þi faderis realme and þine . . ."[2]—a statement which enables us to date his return six years previously, *i.e.*, about 1483. The second proof is, that we find him sitting in the Scottish Parliament which took up session on 16th February 1483 or 1484 and a second time in May 1484.[3] Both times he sits "*pro clero*" and is entered just before the "barons."

There can thus be no doubt that Irlande was honourably received and distinguished by signal marks of royal favour on his return, becoming, as he did, the confidential adviser and private chaplain of James,[4] and taking his seat in the Parliament of the realm. One of the features of the "Meroure," indeed, is the number of its allusions to his intimacy with the late ruler of Scotland, for whom he had acted as diplomatic agent ". . . anens the kingis of fraunce, jnglande and vthir princis . . ."[5]

One such embassy, doubtless, was that which called him to Paris, along with the Earl of Argyle, the Arch-

[1] "Append. ad Bœth.," fol. 402*a*.

[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 357*a*.

[3] "Acts of Parl. of Scot.," ed. Thomson, Lond. 1814, Vol. ii., pp. 153 167.

[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W." p. 15 *et passim*.

[5] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 357*b*.

bishop of St. Andrews and others, in 1484,[1] to take from the new French king (Charles VIII.) in person the oath of renewal of the "Ancient Alliance": in the records of this embassy he is now styled "Dr John Irlande, Doctor of Theology and Rector of Hawick." A second such mission of which we have a record engaged him in 1487, when a safe-conduct was granted by Henry VII. at the request of James, to "the Bishop of St. Andrews and John Irlande, clerk."[2] From these and similar indications we can see that he played by no means a negligible *rôle* in the public life of his day.

Of Irlande's precise ecclesiastical standing at this time it is less easy to speak. We know—he tells us himself—that he was private chaplain to James III.,[3] and, for a time at least, to his son. Ferrerius says he was rewarded soon after his return with a high ecclesiastical benefice (*sacerdotio amplissimo*)[4]—a statement which is puzzling. Not only is he not to be found in the lists of high church dignitaries, but in all the references to him up to 1490 he is styled "Rector"[5] or "a clerk."[6] This, it is clear, must have been his status during the lifetime of James III.

Yet here again there is some confusion. Crauford (*sub anno* 1484) says Irlande was "Rector of Hawick," and Irlande himself says (in the "Meroure," 1490) that he was "*Rector de Foresta.*" The latter must evidently be the truth. This "*Foresta*" was *the* Forest, "Ettrick Forest," in the County of Selkirk, and the "Rectory" which Irlande held fell within the bounds of the present parish of Yarrow,[7], and was in the See of Glasgow.

[1] *Vide* Crauford, "Affairs of State," Edin. 1726, i. 45. The Archbishop alluded to was none other than the notorious Schevez, to whom I shall refer later, *Cf.* "D.N.B.," l., pp. 416-17.

[2] Rymer, "Fœdera," orig. ed., xii. 326; Syllabus by Hardy, Lond. 1873, i., 721. His companion was again Schevez on this journey.

[3] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," p. 15, *et passim.*

[4] Append. ad. Bœth., fol. 402*a*.

[5] *Cf.* Crauford, *loc. supra. cit.*, and "Meroure of W.," fol. 357*b*.

[6] *Cf.* Rymer, *loc. supra. cit.*, p. 19.

[7] *Cf.* Chalmers, "Caledonia," Lond. 1807 (*seq.*). Vol. ii., pp. 998ff.

Before the Reformation what is now the single parish of Yarrow had contained three churches—Duchoire(Dewchar), St Mary's of the Lowes, and Kirkhope.[1] One of the two last mentioned was Irlande's church—Chalmers identifies it with certainty as Kirkhope.[2] It is probable that Irlande was presented to this living on his return from France[3] (1483-84) as Ferrerius [4] says, but it was at best a very modest "*sacerdotium amplissimum*."[5] We have seen that Crauford styles him "Rector of Hawick" in 1484. There is a "*Rectoria de Havick*"[6] quite near, in the adjacent county, in Teviotdale, and Crauford made the error—a very natural one—in attempting to give a "local habitation and a name" to "*Foresta*." The number of "Forests" in Scotland has always been a source of confusion in early documents.[7]

If Irlande ever preached much in his charge may be doubted. Ferrerius, with his customary flourish, calls him "*concionator percelebris*,"[8] and another MS. speaks of him as having spent "much profitable labour" in the diocese of the Archbishop of St Andrews.[9] Irlande himself alludes to his preaching,[10] but he lays little claim to eloquence, save in the Latin tongue.[11] In one passage he even talks of the difficulty he had in expressing himself

[1] *Cf.* Chalmers, *loc. cit.*, p. 1002.

[2] *Loc. cit.*, p. 1002.

[3] Though the "Acts of Parl. of Scot." make no mention of it—ed. Thomson, ii. 153, 167.

[4] Append. ad. Bœth., fol. 402*a*.

[5] In Bagimont's Roll (*summa decimarum*), the "Rectoria de Foresta" is computed at xiij. lib. vjs. viiid. *Cf.* "Regist. Episcop. Glasg.," ed. Innes, Edin., 1843, App. I., p. lxiv.

[6] Gawain Douglas, of literary fame, was Rector of Hawick in 1496.

[7] Even Leyden, who was born near Hawick, suggests "Forres" (!) for "Foresta"—*loc. supra. cit.*, p. 85.

[8] Append. ad. Boeth., fol. 402*a*.

[9] "Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts" (Venetian), ed. Rawdon Brown, Lond. 1864 (No. 595).

[10] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 357*a*.

[11] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 164: yet Irlande was liberal, wishing high and low "to know pe law of God . . . in par awne tovng."

in the vernacular, and affects somewhat the scholarly disparagement of the *lingua vulgaris* common to Latinists of his day.[1] Doubtless he remained in the more congenial atmosphere of the Court, and discharged the duties of his Rectory through a cheaper substitute.[2]

The increasing dissensions between James III. and his turbulent nobles culminated in the murder of the king at Sauchieburn in 1488, and his son, James IV., then only fifteen years old, was set on the throne to rule in the interests of the Angus faction. Here again the death of his benefactor would seem to have marked a turning-point in the fortunes of Irlande. Though he was continued in his office of "chapillane and oratur"[3] to the boy king, whom he must have known well enough, yet the general tone of the "Meroure" does not suggest a very close intimacy with the youth. Nor could there well be, considering the discrepancy of their years. Truth to tell, there were other and younger candidates for the royal favour, and the very fact of Irlande's writing such a book as the "Meroure," and the strong didactic tone in which it is couched, might indicate that the old confessor watched with something of apprehension the development of the "tender side"[4] of the monarch's character, by which he is best known to posterity. Besides, the boy king was a mere tool in the hands of the ruling faction.

An interesting light is shed on the internal relations of the Scottish Court at this period by a letter, written by James IV. to Pope Innocent VIII. in 1490, and still preserved in St Mark's Library in Venice. The Archbishop of St Andrews at this time was the notorious William Schevez,[5] a scheming prelate, who had obtained great influence over James III. That monarch had employed him on many embassies—to France, England,

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 164, *et fol.* 357*a*.

[2] For the usage, *cf.* Story, "Church of Scotland," Lond. 1890 (*seq.*), ii. 273-74.

[3] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 15.

[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 60, *et passim.*

[5] *Cf.* "D.N.B.," l. 416-17

and Rome—on several of which, indeed, he was accompanied by Irlande.[1] Latterly, however, he sided with the revolutionary nobles, and supported the young prince in the revolt which led to the death of his father (1488). For a time at least he retained his ascendancy over the young king, who also employed him as his ambassador. He died in 1496-97.

Between the Archbishop and Irlande there seems to have been friction even during the lifetime of the late king: perhaps Schevez was jealous of Irlande's closer intimacy with the monarch. Being presumably unable to oust Irlande as long as James III. (who had specially exempted him from the Archbishop's jurisdiction)[2] was alive, he seems to have utilised the inexperience of the young king to have him cited before the Church Courts in Rome. The letter in question, which bears the signature of the Scottish King, is no doubt the counter-stroke of the Irlande party. As it is important and not very accessible, a translation of it is here transcribed[3]:—

(*James IV., King of Scotland, to Pope Innocent VIII.*)

"There was one whom our father held dear, a Parisian professor of divinity, a certain *Johannes de Irlandia*, his ambassador to kings and princes abroad, and his counsellor at home—most admirable as his confessor. We ourselves bear this individual sincere affection, and need his services in the same functions.

"This man, by reason of the grievous vexations which the Archbishop of St. Andrews brought undeservedly upon him, was for just cause, together with his church, exempted at our father's suit from the Archbishop's jurisdiction, and placed under the protection of the Apostolic See. This exemption we appreciate highly, for we deemed it just that those whose assistance is needed by their governments should be free and subject

[1] *Cf. supra*, p. 19.

[2] *Cf. infra*, p. 22.

[3] *Cf.* "Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts" (Venetian), ed. Rawdon Brown, Lond. 1864 (No. 595).

to none other but your Holiness. We, our Council, and the peers (*magnates*) of our realm marvel that this man of virtue and learning, who has spent so much profitable labour in this Archbishop's diocese, should never have been able to win the favour of this prelate, who, after harassing him in his own country, now that the man is of mature age, has summoned him to your Court for a fictitious cause, in order to invalidate his exemption. Verily, we cannot dispense with the services of such a man, whose mere absence, not to say his overthrow, would be very deplorable for us and our realm.

"We therefore pray you to make provision touching these enormities, and not to suffer our ambassador to be in any way molested by this powerful Archbishop; and although from time to time our petitions in favour of certain prelates reach you, yet we love this man more than any other, and treat him with the greatest favour; wherefore we beseech you to cancel the citation against him, and that in this and in other matters you will give true credence to our procurator, Andrew Forman.[1]

"Your Holiness' devoted son,

Rex Scotorum,

JACOBUS.

"From the Palace of Linlithgow,
the 26th of Sept. 1490.

What the upshot of this discordance was is not now easily ascertainable, but one thing seems certain: from now on, Irlande's political influence is on the wane. He goes no more on embassies and his name vanishes from the records. The colophon of the "Meroure," dated in this same year (1490), is the last definite information we have regarding him. Henceforth there are only the vague or inaccurate statements of the historians to guide us.

First of all, Dempster, who says that Irlande died "*archidiaconus Sancti Andreæ*."[2] This assertion, already

[1] *Cf.* "D.N.B.," xix. 436.

[2] "Hist. Eccl. Gentis Scot.," ix. 752.

puzzling enough, has been rendered more embarrassing still by Walcott, who says Irlande was archdeacon of St Andrews in 1483.[1] As he gives no reference for his information, one cannot say how he came by it, but the date, if not the fact, must be incorrect. From the Register of the Privy Seal[2] we know that Alexander Inglis was archdeacon of St Andrews from that year to 1490-91, and as we now know that Irlande only returned from France at that time (1483), and that he is never styled archdeacon in the records or by himself, it will be seen that the statement is highly incredible. Irlande could not well have been archdeacon prior to the composition of the "Meroure" in 1490, else he would have mentioned it, and the strained relations between himself and Schevez preclude his being archdeacon before the latter's death (1496-97). Though the list of archdeacons is far from complete,[3] one is thus justified in asserting he can only have occupied that position, if at all, for a very brief period about the turn of the century. That is the case against Dempster: as we shall see there is also a point in his favour.[4]

As to the date of Irlande's death we can say next to nothing. Stevenson quotes Leyden to say that he was tutor to James V.[5] This is a very remote contingency, as James V. was only born in 1512, when Irlande was verging towards eighty, and were he actually a royal preceptor, one might expect Buchanan to know more of his predecessor than he does. Perhaps it is best to say with

[1] Walcott, "Scoto-Monasticon," Lond. 1874, p. 91.

[2] "Reg. Sec. Sig." (*Index Officiorum*).

[3] Archdeacons of St Andrews were: Schevez (1476), Alexander Inglis (1481-90), Robert de Fontibus (1497-98), Gawinus Dunbar (1504-13). Yet Crauford ("Affairs of State," i. 45) calls Inglis simply "Dean of Dunkeld," *sub anno* 1484.

[4] *Cf. infra*, p. 27.

[5] *Cf.* "Scot. Antiq.," xiii. 109. The royal tutors were: Gavin Dunbar (*vide supra*, Note 1), John Bellenden, David Lindsay, and James Inglis. Perhaps Dempster confused Dunbar with Irlande. *Cf.* "D.N.B.," *ad nom.*, *et* xxix., 154.

Dempster: ". . . *quando obierit non deprehendi* . . .,"[1] adding that he did not long survive, if he reached, the inception of the sixteenth century.

A little light—or rather "darkness visible"—is thrown on Irlande's end by the Graye MS.[2] This is a somewhat heterogeneous collection of genealogies, chronologies, Acts of Parliament, and poems, compiled by a certain James Graye, sub dean of Dunblane, who was *de son vivant* "secretary, scribe, and notary" to William Schevez, the second, and James, Duke of Ross, the third Archbishop of St Andrews. In his official capacity he seems to have had access to and to have copied from the records of St Andrews cathedral. The date of Graye's MS. (which is not homogeneous) may be taken as not later than 1513, as the genealogy of the Scottish kings is only brought down to James IV., who was killed in that year. It is not earlier than 1503-04, when the Duke of Ross died.

Among other documents, Graye has copied the preamble to Irlande's will. Unfortunately he has transcribed only that part of it which was of professional interest to himself, thus depriving us of a valuable clue to Irlande's declining years. As the MS. has not yet been printed, I append the document here:—

TESTAMENTUM JOHANNIS DE IRLANDIA

"Jn nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen. Ego, johannes de yrelandia, servus χristi ihesu, quod in me corruptibile est casurum percipiens, et ex hoc quamplurimos, quia nequid considerant, ex improviso decepi considerans, ad meam salutem providam in bono ac maturo sensu. χristiane fidei integritatem cognosco, credo atque confiteor, inimico humani generis. Sathane, et omnibus suis operibus, sicut in baptismo domino deo promisi, abrenuncio, et unum deum in trinitate et trinitatem in Vnitate—hoc est, vnum deum in essencia et tres

[1] *Loc. cit.*, ix. 752.

[2] Advocates' Libr., Edin., No. 34.7.3, ffol. 55*b* *seq.*: *Cf.* Innes, 'Critical Essay," Edin 1879, pp. 627 ff., 671 ff.

personas in deitate denota mente adoro. Omnes insuper articulos Xristiane fidei, tam explicitos quam inplicitos, quos credat sancta ecclesia catholica firmiter credo, et imploro humiliter sancte trinitatis auxilium, vt in illa hora tremenda, qua spiritus a carne separabitur, vt per filii sapienciam haustucias diaboli cognoscam pariter et euadam, vt per spiritus sancti bonitatem eiusdem spiritus maligni nequicias abhorream, et per patris potenciam ipsum spiritum malignum in vltimo certamine vincam et superem.

"Obsecro insuper humiliter qua possum deuocione, ut quicquid humanum aut fragile, quicquid tetrum aut diabolicum perpetraui, per meritum glor[i]osissime et sanctissime passionis domini jhesu michi peccatori diuina pietas ignoscat.

"Virginis insuper integerime, sanctissime matris dei in mea necessitate vltima suplex posco auxilium & misericordiam, quoniam ipsa est misericordiæ mater et maximum peccatoris refugium.

"Omnium insuper sanctorum, angelorum & hominum in meo fine auxilium deposco; ferant eo tempore juuamen sancti, appostoli, euuangeliste, martyres, virgines, confessores et omnes celestis spiritus; ferant, oro, medicinam egroto, lapso solamen, nudo tegumen, lumen orbato.

"Jnprimis igitur do & lego deo, virgini et sanctis omnibus pauperimam animam, et corpus ecclesiastice sepulture committo, et maxime in potenciam sacramentorum corporis domini ihesu, vt coram eo virgo beata prebeat patronum, vt misericordia domini ihesu & meritum sue passionis atque sanctissime eucharistie cum precibus virginis me liberent a penis inferni atque finaliter perducant ad illa eterna paradisi gaudia que suis ordinauit electis. Et dabit in fine, cum dixit: Venite, benedicti patris mei, percipite Regnum quod vobis paratum est ab origine mundi. . . ."

Such is our last memorial of John Irlande. The whole tenour of the will indicates an aged man, with most of his dreams behind him, taking a calm retrospect of his

life. Here and there it is couched in fervent language, and would show that he died as he had lived, a good son of the Church. (The passage ". . . *sathane* . . . *abrenuncio* . . ." is not to be taken as a recantation: it is merely a reiteration of the baptismal oath.[1]) For the rest we may suppose him to have been thrifty, and to have acquired something more of the world's gear than the "*Johannes Irlande, studiosus pauper*," who had sat in the "*schola arcium*" of St Andrews, half a century before.

The question arises: Where did Graye come upon the will—in Edinburgh or in St Andrews? The two archbishops whose secretary he was were almost as often in one town as the other—one of them, in fact, died in Edinburgh—and the last we hear of Irlande he is in Edinburgh too. If Graye found the will in St Andrews, it might be taken as a point in favour of Dempster (that Irlande died "*archidiaconus Sancti Andree*"). On the other hand, James, Duke of Ross, the second of Graye's masters, was a brother of James IV., and would be frequently about the Court in Edinburgh, where Irlande (presumably) still was. The point cannot be determined with the evidence at our command, and we must leave it an open question.

NOTE.—Though as yet unable to advance any positive evidence in support of the view, I am much inclined to think that Irlande belonged to a monastic order. If the surmise prove correct, we should here have a most hopeful clue. Ayala, the Spanish Ambassador, reports (*sub anno* 1496) that James IV. had a confessor of the Observantine Order at Stirling. This was not Irlande, and the fact would lend colour to the suggestion that Irlande did not achieve or long retain that intimacy with the young king which he had enjoyed with the old.

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 36.

OTHER WORKS BY IRLANDE

Irlande would appear to have been a fertile writer, and composed, besides the "Meroure," a considerable body of didactic writing, of which the bulk has apparently perished. According to the meagre information that can be gleaned regarding them, these were almost exclusively treatises on devotional or dogmatic questions, and were for the most part in Latin. An attempt has been made below to enumerate and identify Irlande's works, as far as definite evidence concerning them is forthcoming.

Our three sources of information under this head are:

(*a*) Irlande's own testimony in the "Meroure" (M).

(*b*) Dempster's list of Irlande's writings (D).

(*c*) The Asloan MS. (A).

With the aid of these, we are able to make out the following list:—

1. *The Buk of the Sentens.* (M D)

At some period during his connection with the Sorbonne Irlande composed his "Buk of the Sentens," an expository academical commentary in four "books" on the principles of true doctrine, which he defended "*scolastice et subtiliter contra errores weicleif et aliorum.*"[1] This work he speaks of with with satisfaction a round score of times in the "Meroure," so that he might be thought to regard it as his *magnum opus.* It was quite certainly in Latin. Dempster mentions it under the title: *In Magistrum Sententiarum.*[2] (Otherwise unknown.)

2. *Conciones Sacras.* (D)[2]

This was a volume of sermons, almost certainly in Latin. Ferrerius calls Irlande "*concionator percelebris.*[3] (Otherwise unknown.)

3. *Epistolas.* (D)[2]

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol.

[2] "Hist. Eccl. Gent. Scot., ix. 752.

[3] "Append. ad Bœth.," fol. 402*a*.

Dempster saw this work in print at Paris, but we cannot even hazard a guess at its contents. It was also a single volume, and again almost certainly in Latin. (Otherwise unknown.)

4. *Reconciliationis Modum, ad Jacobum III. Regem, super dissidio cum duce Albaniæ.* (D)[2]

Probably undertaken at the instigation of Louis XI. about 1479, this work might have been invaluable for the historian of a very dark age in Scottish history. It was certainly in Latin. (Otherwise unknown.)

5. *De Speciali Auxilio.* (M)

This would appear to have been a doctrinal work in Latin, proving ". . . þat the help and suple of god, þat is callit *speciale auxilium* . . . is necessare to euade and enchew syn, and . . . þe sammyn singulare and speciale help of God and grace is necessare to all merit and gud werkis . . . maid in Latin at þe request of the nobile and hie prince james the thrid, king of Scotis . . ."[1] This is probably the work he alludes to as ". . . ane vthir werk maid in latyn *ad requestam Jacobi tercii, scotorum regis illustris* . . ."[2] (Otherwise unknown.)

6. *De Conceptu Virginali.* (M)

Here again we have to deal with a devotional work in Latin, ". . . maid at the request of þe nobile and mychty prince of gud memore, james the thrid . . . send furth of parice . . . ."[3] It is several times alluded to in the "Meroure."[4] (Otherwise unknown.)

7. *a. De Beata Virgine.*
   b. De Partu Virginis.
   c. Pro Festo Annunciacionis.
   } (M)[1]

Of these three Latin hymns, which show taste and metrical accuracy, if a rather conventional imagination, he made the first and the second in Paris, and sent them to James III., together with his work on the Immaculate

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 48 *et al.*
[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 198.
[3] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 48, 102, 165, *et al.*
[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 171 ff., 175 ff., 177 ff.

Conception.[1] The third is on a kindred theme and, though he does not explicitly say so, is no doubt of his own composition. (Preserved in "Meroure.")

These works, the chronological sequence of which is largely tentatory, were almost certainly all written abroad and all in Latin. On his return Irlande would seem to have had recourse to the vernacular again.

8. A book "maid in the Castell of Edinburgh." (M)[2]

This work, of which we know little except the name, was written after his return, after he had become "chapillane" to James III. It was probably in the vernacular, and may be identical with 9. (Otherwise unknown.)

9. "A Treatise on the Passion, the Sacrament, and Virtue of Penance, Confession, Prayer," etc. (A)[3]

This book, certainly composed after Irlande's return, is certainly in the vernacular, as the author in Chapter II speaks of the "causis of compilacioune of this werk in this langage." It might be the work alluded to in the "Meroure" (perhaps both are identical with 8), in which case it is a recast of a previous Latin composition of Irlande.[4]

10. The "Meroure of Wyβdome."

To conclude the list of Irlande's known works, one must enumerate the "Meroure" itself, in date probably the latest and certainly one of the most voluminous.

11. Scattered up and down the "Meroure" are numerous references to other "books" which Irlande says he has written or purposes to write, but as[5] their identification is wholly speculative, anything we may have to say regarding them has been reserved for the Notes (q.v.).

[1] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 165.

[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 198.

[3] As this MS. is no longer accessible, I am indebted for a description of it to Gibb's Notes for Chalmers—Laing MSS., Univ. of Edin., No. 450 (1). The Asloan MS. dates from the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Every philologist will hope that the embargo which Lord Talbot has laid on it may ere long be removed.

[4] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 257.

[5] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," fol. 258.

SYNOPSIS OF THE "MEROURE."

PROF. MILLAR has described the "Meroure" as "apparently an original piece of hortatory social philosophy"[1]—a description more suggestive than informative. Generally speaking, the "Meroure" is a kind of "*Speculum Regis*," as they were common enough in that age, only that the precepts it enjoins are more than usually pointed with scriptural wisdom, or, as Irlande puts it, "starklie fundit in haly writt."[2] Not might, or violence, or caprice is the principal thing in ruling a kingdom, but wisdom; therefore the youthful monarch is admonished to be wise. The king must, however, not fail, to make the distinction between man's wisdom, which is but folly, and the wisdom of God. God rules the world by a wise benevolence, and the king, who is but his vicar on earth, must follow his great example: how best to do so must be learned in all humility from holy writ, the law of God (i. 5-8).

Proceeding, the author goes on to show that dominion and power have always gone hand in hand with wisdom, as witness the successive rise and decline of the Jews, Assyrians, Persians, Trojans, Greeks, Macedonians, Carthaginians, Romans. These nations were each great in their turn so long as they were guided by wise men—Solomon, David, Darius, Hector, Plato, Aristotle, Hannibal, the senate—but they were all undone by folly (9-11). Yet this was but temporal greatness and temporal wisdom, of which the king must beware: the only wisdom which will recoup him here and hereafter is the heavenly wisdom, to inculcate which is the main purpose of this book (12-16).

This true wisdom is first attained by humility, submission, and humble prayer (17-18), and the best

[1] "Literary Hist. of Scot.," Lond. 1903, p. 119.
[2] *Cf.* "Meroure of W.," i. 164.

prayer and chief gateway to understanding is the *Pater Noster*, the Lord's Prayer (19-22). Thereupon the Lord's Prayer is explained petition by petition, with apposite illustrations from Holy Writ and the Early Fathers, from Plato, Aristotle, and the Schoolmen, and the limits of wise and legitimate desires are indicated and defined (23-56). A eulogy on the Christian virtues of patience and prayer concludes the First Book.

In the Second Book fresh ground is broken. The primeval condition of man is described, in which he needed to pray for nothing, but, as the child of God, had dominion and perfect understanding (57-64). His physical condition, too, was immaculate, and his children were born in a state of innocence. There follows a long disquisition on Predestination, Free Will, the Fall, and the Atonement (65-75). An account is given of the Earthly Paradise, the high seat of perfect man, and its symbolical relation to the Heavenly Paradise, the seat of the Church Triumphant (76-83). The nature of Original Sin is next examined, which caused our progenitors to forfeit Paradise and their state of perfection (84-89). Hence the need of redemption and of the Incarnation, to which we owe our salvation (90-93). The nobility of Jesus and the dignity and purity of the Virgin, his Mother, are recounted at great length (94-105), whereupon ensues an allegorical interlude—the great "disputacioune" before the High Throne of the Heavenly Judge, anent the redemption of man from his miserable condition. Verity and Equity advance their arguments against, Mercy and Charity for, the succour of mankind (106-117). The contention is referred to Dame Peace, who pleads that the discord between God and his servant, Man, must be ended. Joined by the Hierarchies and the Angels, the sisters unite all their eloquence to appeal for a reconciliation between God and his creatures, human lineage. Jesus offers himself for the work of redemption. Finally God relents, and decrees that Jesus shall become Incarnate, and redeem the soul of man (118-125). Gabriel is summoned to

make the Annunciation, to which the Virgin graciously assents (126-142). The following seven chapters are occupied with an erudite exposition of the Magnificat, and of the significance and power of the holy name, Jesus Christ (143-165). Improving the occasion, the author here (166-170) appends a metrical Prayer to the Virgin (which he ascribes to Chaucer), and three Latin hymns (two of his own composition)—the first commending her excellence, the second and third extolling the relief that the Virgin Birth brought to all the world (171-186). These conclude the volume.

THE TRANSCRIPTION.

In transcribing the Text of the "Meroure," no effort has been spared to be conservative. As far as consistent with perspicuity, everything has been retained that could give the scholar an exact picture of the language and trustworthy material on which to work, without forgetting that Parthian ally, the "general reader."

The body of the Text has been printed in ordinary ("lower case") type, uniform with other works of the S. T. S.: to indicate expanded contractions, italics have been employed. In dealing with the Latin quotations, which form such a large part of the work, the order has been reversed: *quotations* are in italics, *expanded contractions* in "lower case."[1] The contemporary Latin orthography has been retained.

Scribal omissions have not been made good, but are noticed in the Notes: only in case of actual error has the liberty of correction been assumed. The punctuation is, of course, the editor's, and is at the discretion of the reader. Capitals have been retained as they stand, except at the beginning of a new sentence or of a quotation, where the modern usage has been followed.

Contractions

Initial and medial contractions are, in general, easily decipherable. In expanding these the editor has been guided by three progressively exhaustive methods:—

1. By the usage or "norm" of the "Meroure" itself in cases where the word can be found written in full. Where two forms occur, the more usual has been taken; where forms of equal frequency occur, the same latitude has

[1] This rule has been departed from in one case—that of the interpolated Latin hymns—*Cf.* i. 171 ff.

been taken as the scribe allowed himself. This, if exceedingly laborious, is still the only conscientious method.

2. Where the above method failed, the usage of contemporary authors in the same dialect has been followed.

3. As a last resource, in a very few cases, resource has been had to philological inference or general analogy. (*Cf.* Notes.)

Final contractions presented more difficulty. It did not seem advisable to disregard the majority of these, as many editors do: on the contrary, every attempt has been made to reproduce them faithfully. Not infrequently, however, the scribe is himself inaccurate or inconsistent. (Any cases of special difficulty are mentioned in the Notes.)

Alphabetical Peculiarities

The handwriting of the MS. is bold and well defined, so that the characters present little difficulty beyond the usual—"m,n, i, u" and "o, v, w," in proximity. The form "ff" (which occurs very rarely) has been rendered by "F" or "f" according to circumstances. In the case of "i, j" (where the MS. almost always employs the long form, though it is occasionally difficult to decide) it has seemed more expedient to print "j" for the long and "i" for the short form, leaving it to the reader to separate vowel and consonant values.[1] For "m" the form "nn" is occasionally employed in the MS., and has been retained. No attempt has been made to modernise the indiscriminate use of "u, v, w"—but the text has been closely followed. Only the superfluous contraction "&c," which occurs after almost every heading or chapter, has been omitted. Instead of "X" the Greek "χ" has been employed in "χristus."

To indicate changes in development, the forms "β, ȝ, þ," have been retained.

[1] Absolute consistency is not claimed. The confusion which the early printers felt in this connection has resulted, among other enormities, in our unreasonable English "I."

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"ꝑ," which occurs medial and final and in compounds, is merely a more elaborate form of "s,"—though sometimes it is a contraction for "sis." For philological purposes, to avoid dispute as to its value in certain cases, it has been everywhere retained in the text.

"ȝ," which occurs initial, medial, and final in the MS., has been retained in all positions. It has, of course, two values, doing duty as "y" and "z."

"ꝑ," which occurs initial, medial, and in compounds alongside of "th," has also been retained for linguistic reasons, and to indicate the gradual displacement of the one form by the other. Other peculiarities are referred to in the Notes.

All the important marginal corrections in the MS. are denoted in the footnotes and enclosed within *angular* brackets in the text. As regards editorial emendations, none but the most convincing have been admitted, and these are enclosed in *square* brackets. Everything savouring of conjecture has been relegated to the Notes.

From the foregoing it will be possible to distinguish at a glance what is due to author and to editor, and thus to control all cases of divergence from the MS., a matter not always easy in editions of our Early Texts.